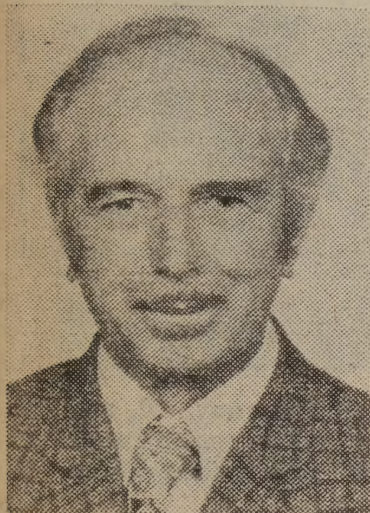


Society's Deputy Director



MR Ken Whiteley has been appointed Deputy Director of The Spastics Society and took up his new position at the beginning of April.

Since November Mr Whiteley has been working for two days a week as a financial consultant to the Society.

The new Deputy Director is 59, and comes to the Society after a successful career in industry at high executive level. For the past two years, Mr Whiteley has operated independently as a business consultant.

Action plan

In a statement explaining the background to the major appointment, the Society's Chairman, Mr Dorrien Belson, says that Mr Whiteley's services were first secured to assist the Hon Treasurer with a comprehensive re-appraisal of financial considerations, undertaken when the Executive Council realised that radical action was necessary because of the Society's income problems. (See story Page 8.)

But as time progressed, said Mr Belson, it became clear that a more far-reaching re-appraisal of the Society would be needed, and Mr Whiteley agreed to phase out his other commitments to work full time for the Society.

"His main task will be to develop a Corporate Plan and arrange for its implementation as directed by the Executive Council, involving the making of detailed proposals for re-structuring the Society's organisation, with implementation as appropriate," states Mr Belson, adding that the Council wants the Society to be in a position to face the 1980s with confidence and a "new look" in which all objectives are clearly defined, and policy co-ordinated.

As the last Director of the Society, Mr James Loring,

"Act Now" to defend the Act

AN impassioned plea to defend the 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act has gone out from an organisation called "Act Now," which is planning a national lobby of Parliament to be held on June 11.

Organisations represented on the steering committee of "Act Now" include The Spastics Society, Disability

Alliance, the Campaign for the Mentally Handicapped, RADAR, MIND, the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus and the Child Poverty Action Group.

At a preliminary conference, "Act Now" declared its belief that the 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act had played an essential part in the improvement of services for disabled people during its 10 years. But

concern was expressed that national and local government financial cutbacks were gravely undermining the Act.

Services for disabled people were particularly vulnerable when local authorities were looking for savings.

The Act was under threat through proposals in the Association of County Councils' Green Paper which would, if implemented, make the provision of services under Section 2 of the 1970 Act discretionary.

"Act Now" comments that when resources are scarce, local authorities are increasingly reluctant to establish need, and their discretionary powers would allow them to act with impunity.

The picture which is emerging from this year's cuts is grim, says "Act Now." A specific example is in the home help service where a high staff turnover makes this service a quick and easy target for effecting saving. Some authorities have

imposed or increased charges for home helps and many disabled people cannot afford these.

In a message to the "Act Now" conference, ex-Minister for the Disabled, Alf Morris, MP, said: "We are witnessing events which make the full intentions of the Act impossible to achieve. We must resist the attack with every weapon at our disposal for in doing so we shall be defending a section of society that is least able to defend itself."

Family with love to spare



JENNY, Daniel, and their foster baby at home. Picture by Michael Abrahams.

Wheelchair mother wins foster parent battle

DESPITE being confined to a wheelchair by cerebral palsy, Jenny Estermann knew she had one thing in abundance to give and that was love. Devoted to children and advised by her doctor that she should not have any more, she desperately wanted to give her son Michael, now nine, the companionship of a brother or sister. But every adoption agency approached by Jenny and her husband Daniel turned them down because of her handicap.

Now Jenny has won the battle to be a registered foster parent. "Looking after babies is pretty basic—it is coping with the public, social workers and bureaucrats that takes skill," says Jenny.

She and her husband have been looking after a Nigerian baby for three months. The baby refers to Jenny as "My Mummy Jelly in a pram"—her

phrase at just 12 months old for describing Jenny's wheelchair.

Jenny and Daniel want to form a pressure group to aid and advise other handicapped parents who want to foster and further their rights.

Jenny Estermann spent all her early years on her back unable to sit up or talk ("I was one of twins—and my mother always treated me as a normal child"). Her mother took her to a series of specialists, convinced that her daughter was not mentally as well as physically handicapped, and eventually succeeded in obtaining a retired teacher as a tutor to the

Hit-and-run death was 'callous'

BIRMINGHAM police have described the crash that killed Mr Dudley Virgo as: "Callous and outrageous slaughter".

Mr Virgo who was confined to a wheelchair by cerebral palsy was a popular figure in his invalid carriage which he drove hundreds of miles every year. On Easter Monday he was driving it when he was struck by a stolen car with such force that the two vehicles were locked together in a skid for 20 yards before Mr Virgo was catapulted from the driving seat. Two men fled from the stolen car leaving Mr Virgo, who was 40, dying in the road.

Workmates at The Society's Meadway Printing Works in Birmingham are in mourning for such a much loved character. Mr Virgo worked on the printing floor setting type. Police are still hunting his killers.

Go places with Newton



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SN April

Spastics News hit by industrial dispute

WE apologise to readers and advertisers for the non-appearance of the March issue of Spastics News, and the delayed publication of the April issue. This was due to an industrial dispute at our printers.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 12



WE are sad to report the deaths of two prominent members of local groups in South Wales.

Mr Phillip Northam, who was a founder member of the Cardiff and District Spastics Association and its vice-chairman, vice-chairman of the Board of Governors of the Spastics Society Craig-y-Parc School, and a member of the Executive Council of The Spastics Society in the early years of its formation, died suddenly in March. Phillip is survived by his wife and three sons.

Mr Cyril Morgan died suddenly at his home in Swansea. Cyril, who had been a member of the management committee of the Swansea and District Spastics Association for over 25 years, was a great worker and supporter of the Society's charity shop in Swansea, and was responsible for maintaining a steady flow of good quality secondhand clothing there. He was a founder member of the Wales Regional Committee. He is survived by his wife and daughter Anne.



WINDOW ON WALES

by Emlyn Davies

Regional Fund aids centres

IN the last issue of Spastics News you will have seen that the Swansea Group's Longfields Centre was facing severe financial hardship. Another centre run by a local group, the Cwmbran Work Centre, which is the responsibility of the Monmouthshire Spastics Society, is also facing severe financial problems.

At the Regional committee meeting recently it

was the unanimous wish of all delegates that Swansea and Monmouthshire be given £6,000 each from the Wales Regional Fund to offset their deficits and to try to maintain their essential services.

Help is also coming from many sources and I am pleased to report that the South East Region has given a £4,000 loan to the Monmouthshire Society in lieu of a legacy which the Monmouthshire Group are expecting about two months from now.

This sort of gesture shows that the whole of the movement comes together in order to maintain services to spastic people.

Towards Target £6,000

EARLY in 1979, the Carmarthen and District Spastics and Handicapped People's Society decided to raise over £6,000 to buy a special incubator for their local hospital in Carmarthen. At the moment everybody is fund raising at a considerable pace to try and achieve their target of over £6,000 by the end of this year.

Flag days at Laugharne, Carmarthen and Velindre have so far raised £346; a Fashion Show organised by local tradespeople raised £209; a village church has given £30; and Carmarthen Lions contributed £50.

Our photograph, left, shows Mr Mike Thomas, who is the project co-ordinator for the group, accepting a cheque for £87 from Mrs Shirley Thomas, captain of Llanboidy Ladies Darts Team.

Picture by Carmarthen Times

Full quota

WHEN it comes to fulfilling the government's 3 per cent quota of disabled workers, Wales is way ahead, especially where local government is concerned.

Nearly half the local district councils in Wales observe the quota while one particular shining example, Lliw Valley in Dyfed, employs 7.2 per cent disabled, believed to be one of the highest rates in the country.

Why can't we go to the pictures?



● BRIAN and Brenda Ferriday with Bryony, 10, and John, aged six, outside the cinema in Barry where they have spent many family outings until renovations denied them access.

Access barred because of 'improvements'

YOUNG Bryony and John Ferriday were thrilled when their parents told them they were all off to the cinema when it re-opened after modernisation to see the latest Walt Disney space fantasy. Their joy turned to tears when, after an hour's queuing, they were told they would not be able to see the film after all because of their parents' handicap.

Brian Ferriday, aged 32, and his wife Brenda, of Colbrook, Barry, are both spastics. For over 10 years they had gone to the Theatre Royal, Barry, because of its ease of access. Brian told Spastics News:

"It was so easy to get into that groups of people would come in from the Penarth Work Centre and the staff were always very friendly and treated us just like any other customers. Now, with the modernisation, the screen has been lifted to balcony height and cannot be seen from the ground floor. When we got to the head of the queue, the staff said 'Oh dear — can you get up stairs?'"

"I explained we could not—I have had operations on my legs, which means they do not bend easily and if I fell, particularly coming downstairs, I would break all the bones in my legs. Brenda is paralysed

down one side and gets spasms on the other which make it impossible for her to let go till the spasm relaxes. She's had problems on buses when she has been holding on to a rail and the spasm has affected her hand, and she's been carried on three stops before the spasm is over. With the rush of people coming downstairs after a film it would be impossible.

"The manager was very apologetic and offered to help us, but there is no lift. What particularly upsets me is that the cinema was completely accessible before the modernisation, and now it's not. I thought that the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act meant that all buildings after 1971 had to be accessible by law, but apparently that's not the case — it was only a recommendation.

Brian visited the Disabled Persons Information Centre, in Cardiff, which advised him to write to his MP.

Family with love to spare

Continued from Page 1

young Jenny, by then aged 14. A fortuitous meeting with a specialist at the Royal Free Hospital also led to Jenny being a "demonstration model" in lectures.

She also started attending Red Cross meetings and eventually began its child care course which in a sense was to change her life. At one point she was sent to the Society's residential hostel, Coombe Farm, but she was unhappy away from her family and after five months returned home, completed her course, took her final exams successfully and was awarded her certificate. She looked after babies and prepared their feeds as part of the course.

Something else was also to change the course of her life dramatically — a

club for the handicapped in Cricklewood. She went one night and saw a young man who had gone as a voluntary helper, Daniel Estermann. Jenny and Daniel agree that for both of them it was love at first sight and they were married at Hendon Register Office.

The birth of their first baby was a source of tremendous joy — and a taste of the tremendous pressures handicapped parents are forced by society to withstand. After Michael's birth, Jenny says social workers repeatedly tried to persuade her to have her baby adopted.

At first Daniel employed a girl to care for Jenny and Michael but when that proved unsatisfactory he gave up his job as a glassmaker to stay at home and look after them both.

The next few years were quite hard enough for the little family. In order to make ends meet Jenny did home work for a firm of knitters, toiling away till 1 am, all for £4 per week. She desperately wanted more babies but after four miscarriages her gynaecologist, who had given her every support and encouragement in her desire for children, had to tell her it was impossible.

Then came the car crash that took away even the last faint hope and left instead permanent pain.

Adoption

She began contacting adoption agencies, 20 all told, of every kind of persuasion and policy, and back came the same reply each time, a handicapped parent would put the adopted child at a disadvantage. It was accepted that her own child was perfectly reared but somebody else's child was different. And yet Jenny and Daniel KNEW that many, many babies were desperately in need of a good home just as they desperately wanted to give a baby one.

Every week in a magazine there are advertisements for foster parents and Jenny decided this was the answer. And so that the natural parents would not be deterred by her wheelchair she invited a friend's children to stay the weekend. When the baby's parents saw the youngsters clambering over Jenny's wheelchair and begging to be allowed to stay yet another night, they had no hesitation

in allowing her to stay — she was then just nine weeks old and she was with them eight months. Their present foster child has been with the Estermanns for almost three months now.

But in order to become registered as foster parents the Estermanns had quite a fight on their hands and it was with some pride that they announced that they did it all by themselves with no help from anyone and active discouragement from quite a few. They had to prove they were even more competent than the average foster parents to satisfy the authorities.

Local people who actually know the Estermanns rallied to their support and signed a petition urging that she should be allowed to continue as a foster-parent in case it should come to the test.

CASTLE PRIORY COLLEGE

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TRADE ENQUIRIES ARE INVITED

New film pleads for 'marvellous beginning' to parenthood

"A MARVELLOUS Beginning" is a film about childbirth and the need for more enlightened antenatal care. It was made by the National Coal Board in co-operation with The Spastics Society as part of its "Save a Baby" campaign.

It will be shown to the public in Rank, Odeon and independent cinemas throughout Britain.

The film explains that too many babies are born too soon, too small or suffering from

handicaps which will be lifelong. Good antenatal care could go a long way to reducing the figures.

Professor Peter Huntingford, a well-known obstetrician and gynaecologist, appears in the film and makes the point that women tend to lose their identity when they are expecting a baby because they are kept waiting in the antenatal clinics and don't feel able to ask the ques-

tions that are worrying them. He says a good appointments system would ensure that women kept their appointments regularly and would be able to see the same doctor or midwife each time and so build up confidence.

'Natural'

"Doctors and midwives need reminding that birth is a natural process and that

women's expectations of pregnancy must be met," he says. Professor Huntingford also believes that women should be allowed to see their records and have them explained in jargon-free language.

Modern maternity care often loosens the bonds between husband, wife and baby. When labour comes, many men feel apart from their wives when in fact they should both take part in the joys and pains of having a baby. The arrival of the baby is most signifi-

cant when all three have shared the experience. It makes "a marvellous beginning."

The film is available in colour, is 16mm and of 10 minutes duration. From Viscom Ltd, Audio Visual Library, Parkhall Road Trading Estate, London, SE21, Tel 01-670 6161, and Concord Films Council, 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BJ, Tel 0473 76012. The film may also be purchased from The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ, Tel 01-636 5020. Quotations on request.

Study into health of 200,000 children

RESEARCHERS are to study the medical records of nearly 200,000 schoolchildren in the North East of England in an effort to find out more about the current causes and incidence of spasticity.

The study, which will be one of the most comprehensive studies of childhood disability undertaken in Britain, is the result of the realisation by Newcastle paediatricians, led by Dr Edmund Hey, that there are no reliable up-to-date figures concerning spastics in Great Britain.

A recent smaller study of local records from the Child Development Centre in Newcastle, following the Society's "Save a Baby" campaign, did suggest a fall in the incidence which reflects findings by Swedish researchers.

Records

The study will involve tracing the medical records of 177,455 schoolchildren born in Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside between 1962 and 1976.

The study will include not only hospital births but all births to mothers living within this self-contained geographical area where there is little migration.

A special point will be made of reviewing all the children in longstay hospital accommodation and all children in schools for the severely subnormal in order to identify any undocumented cases of cerebral palsy.

At the same time as the survey there will be a review assessment of the nature and degree of every handicapped spastic child in the area.

Fellowship holiday

THE Society's Thomas Delarue School in Tonbridge, Kent, is the picturesque setting for a holiday being run by the Inter School Christian Fellowship for boys and girls between the ages of 16-19 who are physically handicapped. The holiday dates are July 29-August 12.

Further details can be obtained from The 16+ Activities Secretary, ISCF, 130 City Road, London EC1V 2NJ.

Kevin's drive for a holiday

A SEVEN-MILE fund-raising drive in a Batric car by a severely handicapped resident of a home for spastics in Southampton has brought in sufficient money for a holiday for all his fellow residents.

Twenty-three year-old Kenny Baxter, of Merlyn House, Southampton, travelled in his battery-operated invalid car along with a police motor cycle escort. The drive took four hours, allowing for stops along the way where pub locals were quick to support and sponsor Kenny.

As a result of his unique fund-raising drive, Kenny was able to hand over a cheque for £286 to Mr Danny Powell, manager of Merlyn House, to help pay for three weeks in Bognor in August for all the residents.

Kenny, who has only been driving the Batricar for just over three months, attends a work centre in Southampton.

Death of Mrs Vbranch

THE Devon and Exeter Spastics Society is sadly mourning the death of Mrs Kay Vbranch, founder of the Vbranch House Centre and School for Spastics in Exeter. Mrs Vbranch was 57, and she died of a heart attack at her home last month.

She and her late husband, Mr Charles Vbranch, who died in 1978, helped start the Devon and Exeter branch.

Commented Mr Michael Holladay, the Society's deputy chairman: "Kay's death is an absolutely tragic loss and no words of mine can adequately express our grief."



● RICHARD and Sandra Creed are a married couple who preach not from the pulpit but from their wheelchairs. Their shared commitment to the Christian faith makes them popular lay preachers all over South East Essex.

Picture by the Evening Echo

Handicapped couple are lay preachers

RICHARD and Sandra Creed are a handicapped couple who share not only a marriage, a mortgage and an adapted Mini, but also a complete commitment to the Christian Church.

Both Richard and Sandra, who in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex, are lay preachers with the Baptist Church and their preaching is carried out not from the pulpit, but from their respective wheelchairs.

They have both completely accepted their disabilities — Richard, 44, was born with cerebral palsy and Sandra, 29, has spina bifida — but they have learned to use them in a very positive way. In fact Richard says he is convinced he was born a

spastic because that makes it easier for him to reach the people he preaches to.

Invitations for this Christian couple to preach comes from far and wide and they are popular preachers throughout South East Essex. Last year they travelled together to Canada on a preaching trip. They also go to schools to talk to children about what it means to be a Christian—and also what it means to be disabled.

Crossed wires

Richard has a good way of explaining his disability to young audiences. He tells them it's like getting crossed wires on a telephone or a wrong number. You dial one number and get something else. "The brain tells your legs what to do, and it's your arms that reply," he says.

Richard's own childhood and adolescence was

not a happy time. He remembers being a rebellious child, resenting not being able to play games.

"I was perpetually frustrated. I could never manage more than three steps in a row. Then I would fall over seething with rage. But it was an achievement even so. I would equate a spastic, like me, taking three steps to an able-bodied person walking from Land's End to John O'Groats."

Sandra has never been able to walk at all and now she acts as chauffeur for the two of them in their adapted Mini. For Sandra, who was scared of driving ever since an accident in her invalid car, learning to drive was an ordeal, but one she bravely faced with the help of her faith.

When it turned out that Richard would not be able to drive because of poor

co-ordination, Sandra offered up a silent prayer: "Please God if you want me to drive. You'll have to let me know. I'll never be able to volunteer."

Her prayer was answered when the instructor at the Department of Health garage came over and asked her if she would like to be driver.

And although it took Sandra five times to get through her test, now she is a competent and confident driver who thinks nothing of setting out for Edinburgh. "You see how God directs our lives," comments Sandra.

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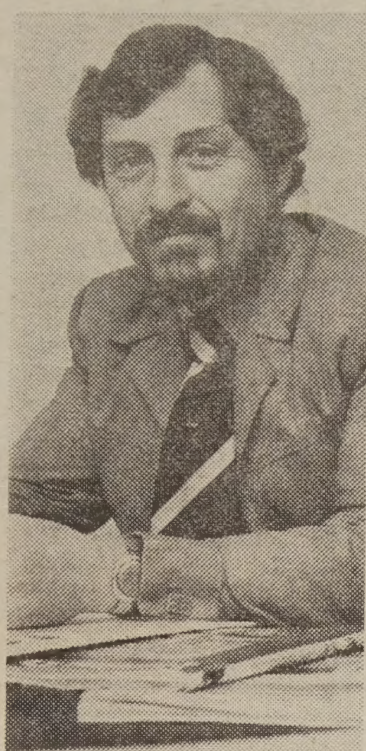
SN April

New marketing man for Newton Aids

ROBERT Goldthorp, general manager of Newton Aids Ltd, has announced the appointment of a new marketing manager, Colin Biddle.

Colin, who is 37 years old, has worked in the powered wheelchair and ancillary aids field for over 10 years. In recent years he has become closely involved with social services and welfare departments, dealing with specially designed wheelchairs for the heavily handicapped. He is well known in the disabled world not only for his publicity and sales work but also his charitable activities with showbiz and sports celebrities.

"I am delighted to have been invited to join the Newton team," says Colin Biddle, "and I feel very optimistic about the company's plans for the 1980s. There are several developments taking place within the company at the moment which will mean a better all round service for the disabled person, and one of my jobs will be to make sure



COLIN BIDDLE

that everyone is aware of them."

Based in Salisbury, Newton Aids Ltd, designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of manual and powered wheelchairs and ancillary equipment for all ages and disabilities.

Professor Tizard memorial fund

A FUND has now been set up in memory of Jack Tizard, Research Professor of Child Development in the University of London and Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit. Professor Tizard, who died last August aged 60, was also chairman of The Spastics Society's Educational Advisory Committee.

The appeal is for donations towards a memorial which would reflect Jack Tizard's central motives. Funds from the appeal will go towards a centre for children and their families to be located in an urban area in England. An

important aspect of the centre would be its availability to all families in a limited district.

In addition to providing a range of services in the health, education and welfare field, the centre would also act as a base for research relevant to its aims. Depending on the amount collected in the appeal, it would either be built and financed by appeal funds or appeal funds would be used to supplement existing provision.

In addition to financing the centre the appeal would fund an annual lecture on a topic within Prof Tizard's range of interest. A collection of his most influential papers, is also being prepared for publication.

Donations should be sent to: Dr C. Kiernan, Acting Director, Thomas Coram Research Unit, 41 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ.

Canterbury Cathedral service for disabled

THERE will be another special service arranged for disabled people on Sunday, June 22, at 2.30 pm, in Canterbury Cathedral by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter.

After the service there will be tea served in the cloisters.

The service in Canterbury Cathedral last year

was attended by over 600 disabled people and their families from all over Kent and the surrounding counties.

Green millionaire!

DORSET housewife, Mrs Dorothy Drinkwater, has become a Green Shield stamp "millionaire" by winning the second lottery organised by the Dorset Spastics Society. Mrs Drinkwater is £390 richer in cash terms and high on her shopping list is a bicycle for her daughter Shelley's birthday.

At the presentation was Mr Ian Collins, Lotteries Manager for The Spastics Society, who helped the Dorset members set up the monthly competition.

"We are trying to allow our regions to raise their own money locally," explained Mr Collins.

The campaigning years

Those famous battles fought for handicapped

WHEN James Loring left the Directorship of The Spastics Society at the end of March, he looked back on 13 campaigning years in which he voiced strong opinions, couched in the most outspoken of terms, in an attempt to force governments, local authorities, the medical profession and hidebound hospital administrators to change their ways for the benefit of handicapped people here today, and the next generation doomed to follow them.

Who at the Society can forget his campaign for the handicapped people existing, forlorn and forgotten, in out-dated, ill-equipped, under-staffed subnormality hospitals? Then he used emotive phrases like "snake pits," "slave ship conditions" and "hell holes." At that time charities were still fighting their way out of the upper middle class, establishment, and Lady Bountiful image, and forceful statements like this were few and far between. Eyebrows were raised, but the people who mattered took notice, and suddenly, the plight of the patients in subnormality hospitals which had often been built as work-houses and were often remote and chronically under financed, became a national issue.

Regrets?

Does he now regret that strong language, and his castigation of the Ministers concerned?

"Not a bit of it. Looking back I wish my language had been stronger. The public had to understand what was going on, and those who were responsible for allowing deplorable conditions to exist had to understand that the nation did care about its most unfortunate citizens. All my statements were borne out by subsequent events.

"The White Paper soon after the campaign backed our demands to reduce numbers in hospitals, and to take as many patients as possible — particularly the children — out of the wards and into small family units in the community, and into other forms of care.

Changes

"Progress has been very slow, partly due to the lack of money and also due to the great reluctance of the people who run hospitals for the mentally handicapped to accept reforms.

"There have been changes in the care of the severely mentally and physically handicapped, but not always in the direction I have wanted. There has been a tarring up of the present hospitals when I would like to see them close down and the people in them returned to their

own areas for community care, and a wider choice of provision.

"As to the children, the Society's Meldreth Manor School has shown what can be achieved with young people who would otherwise probably have been in subnormality hospitals. Meldreth demonstrated that if these children have a personal programme of education, care and training, the results are quite considerable.



Mr James Loring, CBE.

One of the reasons for James Loring's interest in the cause of the mentally handicapped was that when he first joined the Society as Treasurer in 1960, he found an organisation so determined to overcome the cruel "village idiot" idea suffered by spastics in the past, that it was rather pressing the idea of "the brilliant brain in the crippled body" to get over to the public that many spastics were highly intelligent. "Certainly this is true," he says, "but there are many spastic people who have the double burden of mental and physical handicap. I thought the Society would be failing in its duty to them if we were content for them to live out their lives in subnormality hospitals."

The Society's "Save a Baby" campaign is another which has called forth some strong language from James Loring. The Society had been aware for some time, because of its extensive medical research programme, that possibly up to 40 per cent of cases of cerebral palsy could be

prevented. Increasingly, the word "prevention" began to be heard around the Society's headquarters at Park Crescent, and two years ago, the all-out effort was launched to alert the nation to the present toll of needless death and handicap, and to press for improved services for mothers and babies.

Vocal

It has been a highly vocal campaign. More money was spent on advertising than ever before, events were organised up and down the country, there was a special exhibition train, a welter of new literature, even balloons bearing the "Save a Baby" message. The campaign thinks Mr Loring has had a "profound effect," and the issues raised such as the lack of intensive care facilities for new-born babies, the need for a vigorous programme against German measles, the need to improve antenatal facilities and matern-

matter where it is born in the world is going to be healthy, needs little medical care, and grow up to be a productive member of society, then it makes common and economic good sense. Not the least advantage is in the happiness and fulfilment of the child and its family."

Great changes have taken place in the operations of The Spastics Society, and James Loring is the first to admit that some may not have been for the best. Perhaps the Society has become too centralised, he says, and "because we have been so clever at the centre we have tended to take away the initiative of the local voluntary groups." Many local groups are doing well and providing a lifeline to spastic people and their families, but there are still whole areas which are not covered by a local organisation.

Before the Society's current financial problems, which now mean staff cuts, office closures, and some contraction of services, the Society made large cash grants to local groups.

Town trend

Another "I wonder . . ." concerns the trend towards opening centres for the handicapped in towns with the idea that the residents would quickly become part of the local community. "I wonder if this has been as successful as we would have thought. People can be very isolated in an urban area while a centre in the country can be the focus for many activities. It is a problem we have not really solved."

One change that he does not see coming is a change of name of The Spastics Society, a "brand image" which is worth millions of £'s every year in fund raising. A small, but highly vocal minority in the Society hates the use of the word "spastic" and substitutes "cerebral palsy" whenever possible. But as Mr Loring points out, a change of name would create difficulties when communicating with the general public, and after the Society had worked since 1952 to make the public aware of the condition and persuade them to donate millions to alleviate it, a change of name would be quite unproductive. And though he is President of the "International Cerebral Palsy Society," he points out that "cerebral palsy" is as much an imprecise term to describe a complex medical condition as "spastic."

Attitudes

But "spastic" or "cerebral palsy," one thing is very clear — the radical change in public attitudes to these handicapped people he has worked with, and for, in the past 20 years.

"It is hard to measure, but it is very real," he declares. "The idea 20 years ago of spastic people marrying and having a baby would have been shocking. Now it is just not news any more."

And the man who has made so much news himself in the last 13 years in the Director's chair was delighted. It is all very well to shout the odds on behalf of greater acceptance of handicapped people, but the real reward comes when you find that the public has listened.

News about the Spastics Pool

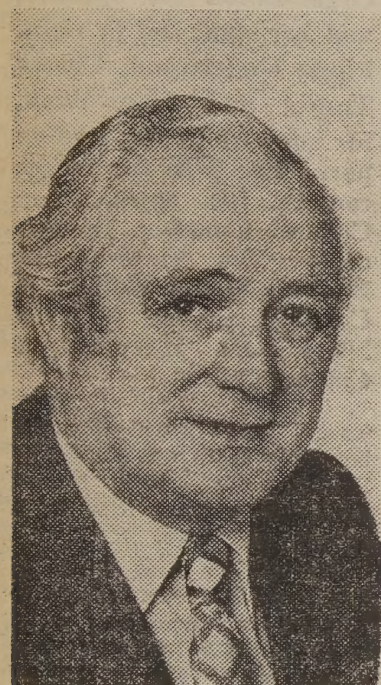
She scoops £10,000 windfall

Picture right:

MRS Hilda Russell at her home in Crowmere Road, Shrewsbury, receiving a £10,000 dividend cheque from the Captain of the Shrewsbury Town football team, Jake King. Hilda intends spending her windfall on a new car for her husband Charles' birthday in March.



New MD for Top Ten



MR Roy Laver has become Top Ten's new Managing Director. He succeeds Mr Kenneth Long who retires this month.

Mr Laver joined the company, which promotes the Spastics Pool, in 1958, from local government, and was appointed to the Board in 1973.

A keen angler, he frequently visits The Chew Valley Lakes, South of Bristol. He also retains an interest in cricket and rugby.



PENSIONER Mrs Annie Mowart, of Wick, Caithness, who won £1,428 on the first dividend, will not be the only one to enjoy her good luck, for Annie is going to spend some of the money on throwing a party for local handicapped children.

Annie received her cheque from Mr Baxter Campbell of the Wick Handicapped Centre.



MRS M. Jeffreys, of Court Wurtin, Ashford, Kent, holding her Spastics Pool dividend cheque for £1,428, which she received from the Mayor of Ashford. Also pictured is collector, Mr Coney.

LIVERPOOL comedian Tom O'Connor presenting a Good Neighbours Trust cheque for £1,000 to Mr Peter Tyson, Chairman of the Old People's Hostel Association. The money will go towards an appeal which has been launched to raise funds for an extension to the Association's premises in Croxteth Road. Good Neighbours Trust is one of three Trusts associated with the Spastics Pool.

Now it's Bali Hi for winners



ATTRACTIVE models Eveline Firetto and Heather Dyson were just two of the 11 beauties who appeared in the recent Charm Girl competition. They were invited along to Westmorland House with TV celebrity Don Moss, to congratulate second prize-winner Garry Mills of St George, Bristol, on winning a 14-night holiday for two on the Pacific island of Bali.

Garry (28), who is employed by the South Western Electricity Board, will be flying with "Garuda" (Indonesian Air-

ways), and the holiday includes full-board accommodation on the island of Bali. It will be his first trip abroad.

The first prize of a three-week luxury holiday for two in Bali, was won by Trevor Martin, of Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire, who received his travel documents from wrestler Ray Steele, at the Festival Pavilion, Skegness. The other second prize winner was Mr H. Samuel, who lives in Surrey.

There were 30 third prizes of seven-night holidays for two in Ibiza and

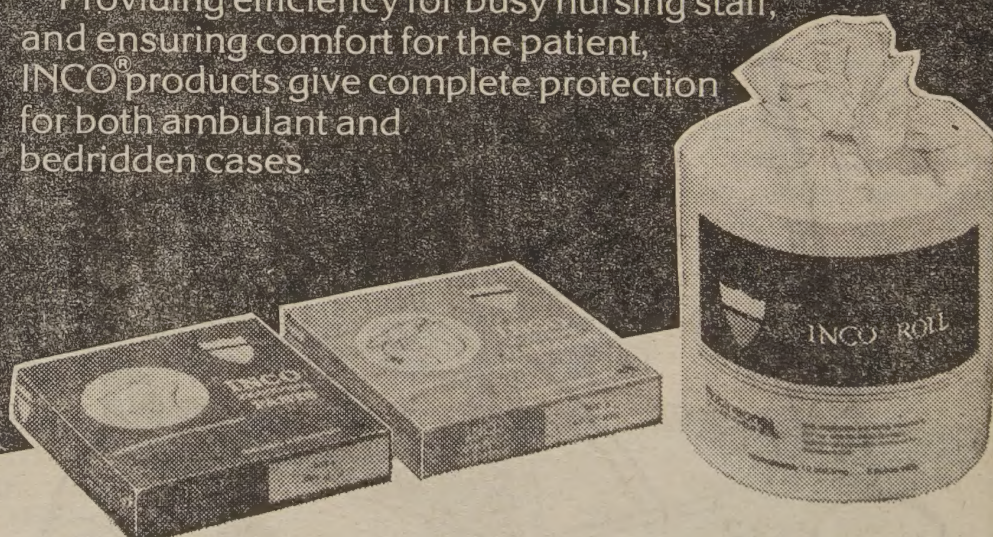
consolation prizes of 1,000 "fivers."

Entrants in the competition had to place in order of preference, eight head and shoulder photographs of attractive young ladies. The competition was judged by TV personalities Leslie Crowther and Don Moss, and Mrs Joyce Smith, a vice-chairman of The Spastics Society.

Picture shows Garry Mills (right) receiving his travel documents for Bali, from Don Moss. Adding glamour to the picture are models Eveline Firetto (left) and Heather Dyson.

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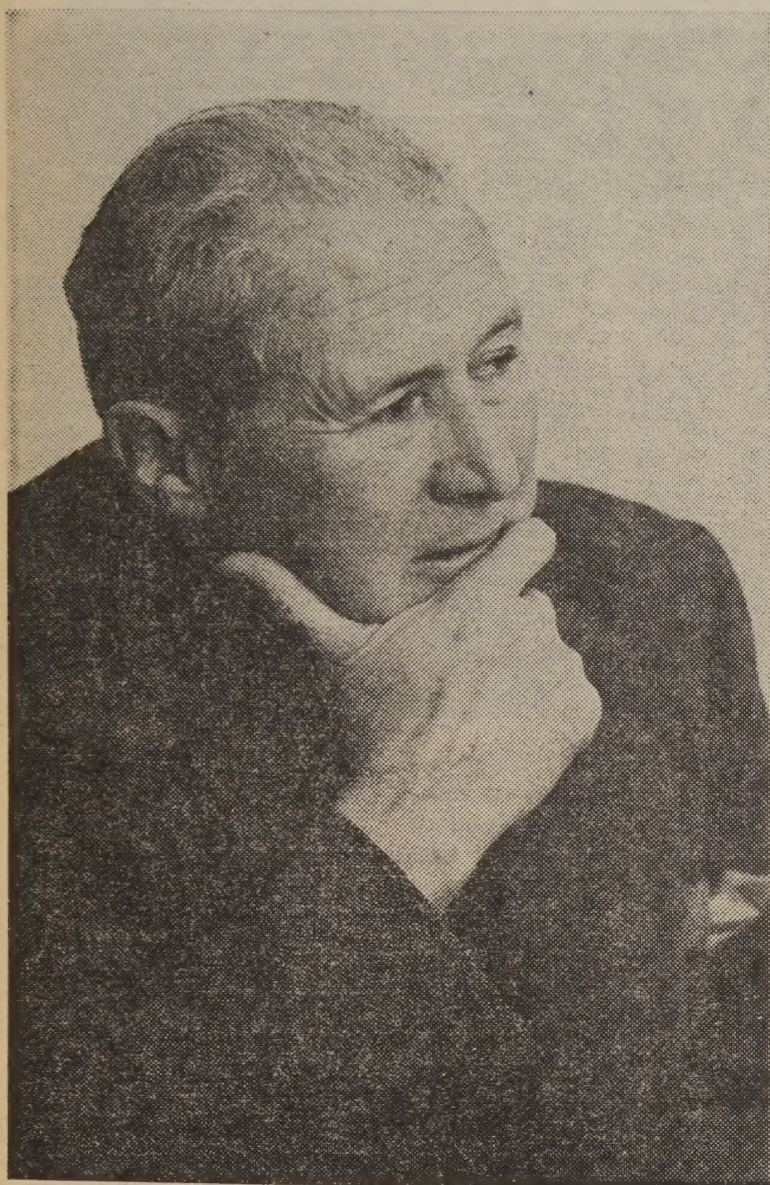
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Spastics News meets Anthony Quayle, Chairman of SOS

Actor's star role for charity



Story by
Liz Cook
Pictures by
Michael
Abrahams

ONE of Britain's most celebrated and respected actors felt at a complete loss when he was asked to take on a new role — that of Chairman of the Stars Organisation of Spastics.

Anthony Quayle explained: "I had never been a member of SOS until John Mills, an old friend, asked me. My reaction was quite simply that I would have liked to have done it very much but I was worried that at first I would be quite inadequate because I didn't know anything about fundraising.

"The idea of becoming chairman was rather daunting. You don't want to take on a job and then do it with absences and so



on. If you want to do it, then you've got to do it properly. I'd got a lot of work on and I really thought the SOS should get someone else. But they told me that they would put up with my inadequacies and so I felt I ought to do it.

"It's a mighty attraction — a great inducement," said the chairman in the measured and mellifluous tones that have entranced audiences of Shakespeare's plays and stirred them in Hollywood movies, "to feel, however slightly, you are needed in any job — or relationship. It's irresistible."

That was just under a year ago and the Chairman, who had never had any contact with the handicapped at all, says of his new part: "It's fine, just fine.

"I have been to all the centres at least once, if not twice, and I think they have the most wonderful atmosphere, marvellous! The handicapped residents beaver away, often with great difficulty, at quite simple jobs, but they are quite happy — because they want to work. They know what life is all about and that it is a struggle. They don't want things handed to them on a plate.

Rewards

"There have been real rewards in being chairman already. It is fascinating in many ways. You feel you are being of some use to people who are very handicapped."

The cynical might be surprised at Mr Quayle's ethos which appears to stand at complete variance with what most people believe of actors when he went on to say: "What are we here for after all but to spend ourselves helping others — not indulging oneself in being 'ME'."

"I want to write a book but knew I would have to stop for three years because I can't do that as well, and it's got to be a big cause to stop you working on a book. It's a big dislocation of one's life but being chairman is a big job — it's as big as you can make it, I just

hope I'm here in three years to write my book, too.

"The job brings me in touch with a side of our business I'd never had anything to do with — I'm just a straight actor.

"I've found that the people who run the centres for spastics are really wonderful — and like the captain of a ship — everything stems from the top. This fabulous atmosphere radiates from the kitchens through to nurses and everyone involved. It's remarkable.

Insight

"The next bonus is the insight it gives into other people like David Jacobs, Leslie Crowther, Sylvia Sims — who's been a friend for years — and Dickie Henderson. A lot of people who are comedians and entertainers who I never knew — they are on the other side of the hill and I'm in a different valley — it's glorious to meet them.

"Being chairman of SOS is a many sided job with close contacts in the homes themselves, to finding out, for instance, what a dear lady the Duchess of Kent is, for example. (The Duchess is Patron of The Spastics Society.) I wouldn't have known what she was like in a million years — but I sat down beside her at a do and what a dear, sweet, warm-hearted person she turned out to be. We are very lucky in our Royal Family.

"You'd think at my age (He's 66.) that I'd seen everything, but I was surprised at the world of the handicapped and those who look after them and those who do the fundraising — all marvellous and fascinating people. I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

Mr Quayle has just finished filming an eight-hour long TV epic in America based on the Masada story when the Jews were besieged by the Dead Sea by the Romans and slaughtered. "All the Jews in it are good — and I'm a villainous Roman who comes to an unpleasant end. All the Jews are played by Americans and all the cynical,

● **NO absentee chairman, Anthony Quayle — he takes the role very seriously knowing that he can rely on the vast experience of Sheila Rawstone (seated at desk), Director of the Stars Organisation for Spastics, and her staff, left to right, Pippa Underwood, Cherry Turner and Jane Wren, for support in the leading part. The SOS runs three centres for spastics — Colwall Court, a holiday centre for children at Bexhill; Wakes Hall, near Colchester; and Good Neighbours House at Camberwell.**

wordly callous Romans besieging them are played by British actors. Now I start work on a long tour of a couple of plays.

Mr Quayle was born in Liverpool but was brought to London as a schoolboy of 11 or so and has lived there ever since. "I've got a lot of Welsh and Manx blood — that's where the name comes from — all those names with a Qu at the beginning come from the old Viking settlement on the Isle of Man." His father was what he described as "an impassioned amateur actor" who thrilled his family with his recitations, but his grandfather on his mother's side was a prosperous manufacturer of drugs. It was he who put Mr Quayle through prep school in Worcester and then Rugby, in the hope that he would go on to Oxbridge, a degree in science and finally the family firm.

Grateful

To his everlasting gratitude Mr Quayle was saved by a family squabble and instead of the drug industry, he went into the theatre which he had been in love with since he was a small boy.

"The family troubles set me free from the wholesale drug industry in Liverpool to my great joy and I went into acting and I've been acting ever since."

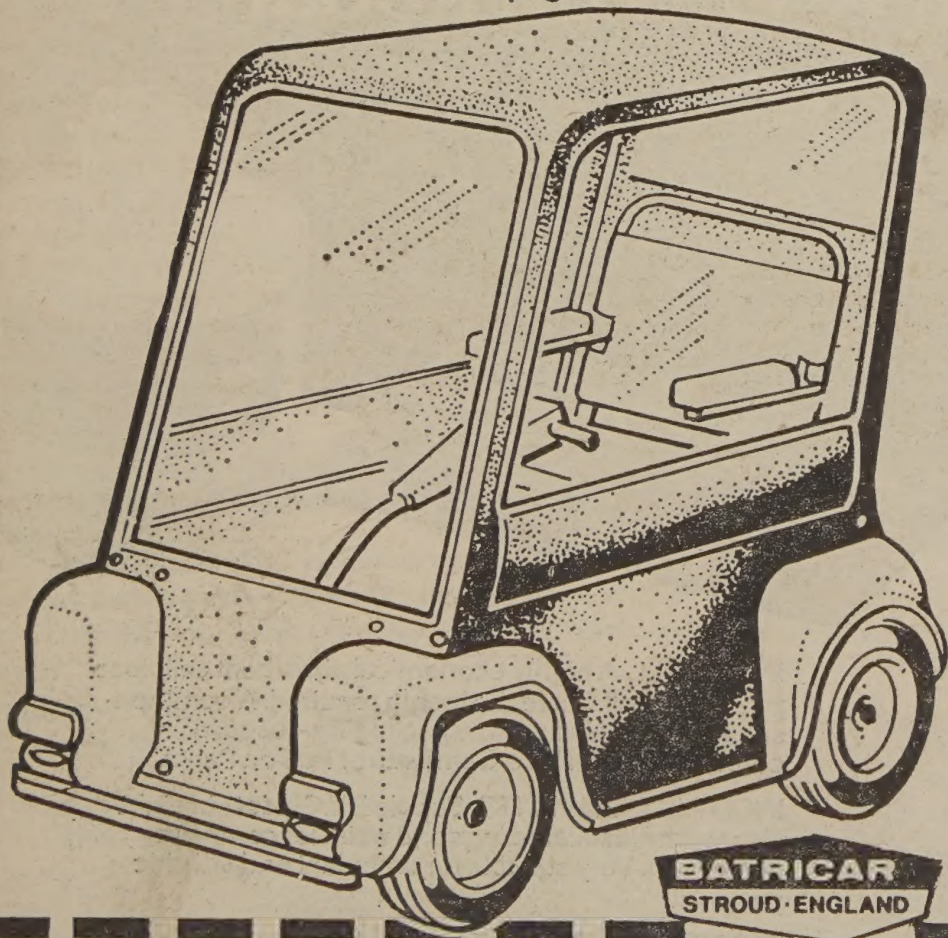
Except that on September 3, 1939, Quayle, Anthony, enlisted as a private in the Royal Artillery. However Gunner Quayle was commissioned and found himself involved in organising Intelligence and Partisan activities.

"I had an interesting war," he reminisces, "billeted in places like Gibraltar seeing all the top generals and politicians like Churchill, Eisenhower, De

Continued on Page 11

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Charities can earn cash from trash . . .

"RUBBISH Tips" is a new film aimed at helping voluntary organisations to collect waste materials for recycling. The film, which stars Ronnie Barker as a "Director of Rubbish," was made for the National Anti-Waste Programme. It shows the intending collector of waste materials how—and how not—to go about it.

The fact that there are hundreds of local voluntary organisations in Great Britain collecting waste proves that it can be very rewarding—both for the collectors and for the charities they support.

But sheer enthusiasm is not enough, and in "Rubbish Tips" Ronnie Barker uses the sold "silent movie" technique liberally spiced with comments in his own inimitable fashion—to show how a certain amount of forethought and organisation can help the intending collector avoid some of the pitfalls. Despite the humorous treatment, he is able to demonstrate at the end the real success which so many collection groups have achieved.

The film, which runs for 11 minutes, is available on free loan, together with a copy of the National Anti-Waste Programme's booklet "A Guide to Voluntary Waste Collection" from Central Film Library, Bromyard Avenue, Acton, London W3 7JB; Scottish Central Film Library, 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow G12 9JN; or Welsh Office Film Library, Welsh Office, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ.

Workshop for the gifted

THE Neath Hill Professional Workshop at Milton Keynes, pioneered by The Spastics Society, is currently considering applications from intellectually gifted people who are severely handicapped with cerebral palsy. Applicants may already be graduates, or in the case of older people, should be of degree-level ability.

The idea behind the Professional Workshop is to provide the specialist computer-based technology, so that a small selected group of severely disabled people who would normally be considered in need of residential care may develop their employment potential appropriate to their qualifications. Help and advice will be given.

Participants in the workshop will live in flats belonging to the Milton Keynes Community Care Service, another pioneering project of The Spastics Society based on the Swedish "Fokus" housing scheme.

Initial applications to Miss M. R. Morgan, Controller of Personal Social Services, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.

100 questions to ask when you visit long stay hospitals

MEMBERS of Community Health Councils, the NHS consumers' watchdog, have a special responsibility when it comes to representing the interests of residents in long stay hospitals.

A visit to an institution achieves little unless you know exactly what to look for, says a newly published booklet from the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London. "CHC Visiting: A Guide to Visiting Long Stay Hospitals and Units" provides background help and information with 100 suggested questions concerning such aspects as per-

sonal clothing, food and drinking arrangements, privacy, further education, recreation, relationships with other residents and with staff as well as staff morale.

There is a tendency in all CHCs to leave the visiting of long stay institutions to those members who belong to relatives' organisations, which is a pity, says the booklet, because trying to improve conditions in long-stay units can be the most rewarding work of all for CHC members.

Examples are quoted in the booklet of incidents revealed on a CHC visit which subsequently triggered off a study into other possible cases, such as the discovery of young disabled people in geriatric wards. One CHC passed on a Burton suit to a patient who was delighted with the gift, which was then sent to the hospital laundry for washing along with the ward linen and patients' clothing. This unfortunate incident, when discovered by the visiting CHC members led

to an inquiry into the whole matter of personal clothing, a study which benefitted all the patients.

The booklet comments that regular monitoring is one of a CHC's most important tasks, but not in the customary form of the usual superficial "Cook's Tour" to the right places which results in the visiting group preparing a report which never fails to say how hardworking the staff are, and deploring the conditions in which they have to work. CHC members,

say the booklet, need to develop confidence in their own judgements as ordinary caring members of the public. They should be able to talk freely with staff without management being present.

The booklet includes advice on how to write a report and then how best to use it. CHCs have no executive power as such, but they can influence planning and also members of the public.

CHC Visiting: A Guide to Visiting Long-stay Hospitals and Units; available from the King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Price 50p plus p and p, 1-2 copies 15p, 3-5 copies 30p, 6-8 copies 50p, 9-20 copies 75p.

Victim of a brutal attack

Who 'put the boot in' for Barry John?

EVERY Monday morning for six years staff arriving at The Spastics Society's London headquarters have received a rapturous welcome from office cats Barry John and Susie, ecstatic that the weekend was over and that they had got company again. That is until the dreadful day when Barry, the more friendly of the two, was left for dead by a brutal assailant.

Explained Tony Ridgley, the Postal Officer: "Normally when I come in I'm greeted by two meowing cats, but this Monday when I came in only Susie appeared. I went to the Post Room where they live, and I got the biggest shock of my life.

"Barry was lying in his box and his head was swollen to twice its size, his mouth was hanging open, discharging blood—I thought he'd got some terrible disease. I got him to the vet as quickly as possible and in a tone of voice that told volumes he said: 'Oh, yes. I've had similar cases. He's obviously been kicked—very hard'."

Blood

Poor Barry John had savage bruising of the head, a hairline fracture of the jaw and four teeth knocked out. He was incapable of eating. The vet had advised a light diet, and Society staff members went out of their way to bring in appetisers, even baby food, but he could not even manage milk, he was in so much pain. Eventually Barry was able to take fish mashed in milk, and because of the cost, all his many friends in the building insisted on buying it for him.

Said Tony: "When I went round telling people

what had happened they just could not believe it. Just about everyone agreed that if they ever discovered the culprit they would do to him what he had done to Barry or worse! We've no idea who it could have been. The cats are never allowed outside. I believe it was done some time on the Monday before I came in at 8 am.

"Barry's a lovely, friendly cat and I think it was someone he knew well enough to go up to. Susie's not so friendly, and also she's quicker on her feet," said Tony.

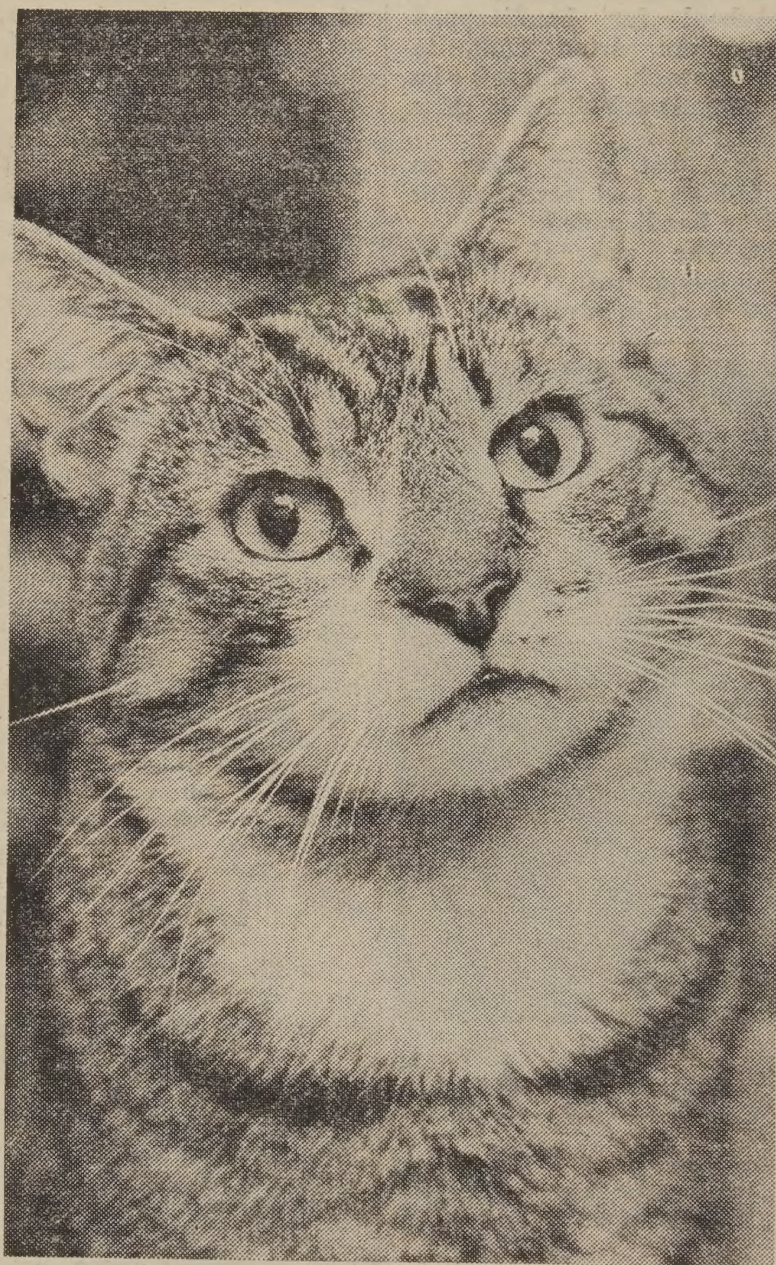
The cats came to the Society from another charity, the RSPCA, after someone who had spent a night in the office building found he was sharing it with mice. The RSPCA did not want to split the cats up, they are brother and sister, so the tabby male and his tortoiseshell sibling arrived as young kittens and soon became everybody's pets.

Budget

At the weekend the building's porter gives them their meals twice a day, and Tony cares for them during the week. The cats come under the Maintenance (Miscellaneous) budget, cost under £300 a year, and obviously work hard because the last trace of vermin found on the premises was a dead mouse two years ago.

Barry is now well on the way to recovery, although his mouth is still cut inside. "But he is a much more nervous animal—he does not like going outside the Post Room door any more, I'm afraid," said Tony. "But I was very touched by everybody's deep concern—he's got many friends in the building and they couldn't do enough for him."

Many friends, but obviously a vicious enemy, too, and if the culprit is ever found then poor Barry John will certainly be avenged. . . .



● LOOKING at Barry John, still radiating love and trust, it is hard to believe that someone saw him like this and brutally kicked his face in. Now happily recovered from the worst of the attack through the devoted care of people at Society headquarters, he still carries some scars.

★ ★ ★

● RIGHT: Susie and Barry John in happier days when they each still had nine lives intact. Susie once went missing for three weeks and was eventually found living wild. They are a "purrfect pair" of rodent operatives and justify their subsidy from the maintenance kitty.

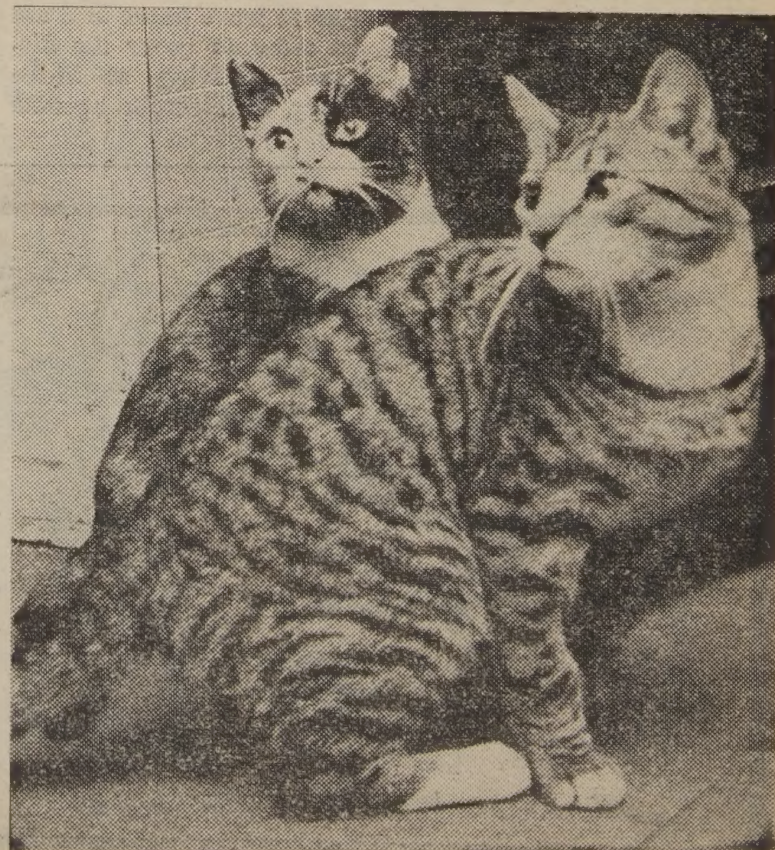
★ ★ ★

Blissful trip for Louise

ELEVEN-year-old Louise Penney from The Spastics Society's Craig y Parc School in Cardiff is to travel to Canada in June to demonstrate her own special means of communication to an all-nation conference. Louise, together with speech therapist Mrs Ena Davies, will take part in a 2½ hour session demonstrating the Blissymbols Communications method at the 1980 World Congress of Rehabilitation International at Winnipeg.

Louise is one of a group of 10 classroom Bliss users at Craig y Parc, and she has been using the picture language system for the past year. Her slight degree of speech is unintelligible but the Bliss method enables her to communicate at almost the same speed as the normal spoken word.

Louise and Mrs Davies are being sponsored on their trip by a Cardiff-based firm, International Computers Ltd, the largest suppliers of computers outside the United States.



CUTS IN SOCIETY SERVICES

MAJOR cutbacks recently announced by The Spastics Society are "essential" mainly because of the ravages of inflation and a Budget which has brought increased VAT, and decreases in income tax adversely affecting covenant income.

The Spastics Society was formed in 1952 by a small group of parents of handicapped children on a £5.00 note. Since then it has grown to be the world's leading organisation for the care, treatment, training and education of cerebrally palsied (spastic) men, women and children. It runs 60 residential schools, centres, workshops and other units all over England and Wales.

Budget adjustments are being put into immediate effect and should result in a saving of £1.5m.

The cutbacks include:

- Reduction in staff and office accommodation.
- A cut in personal services to the handicapped, including a reduction in social work support, careers advice and employment.
- The end of the Society's research into employment for the severely handicapped.
- The closure of the Aids

Development Service and of the Resources Communications Department which provided a video service for training purposes.

● Disposal of some of the Society's available assets, including the closure of a school for handicapped children, Irton Hall, in Holmrook, Cumbria (already scheduled to close in 1981).

● A cut in spending on holidays and recreation for the handicapped.

● The end of further developments.

● A cut in advertising.



Best feet forward for Wakes Hall

GRACE Chapman, from Wakes Hall Centre for Spastics, receives a £62 cheque on behalf of all the residents from 17-year-old Mark Drury from Sible Hedingham, who walked over 60 miles to raise the money.

Mark and his fellow

fundraiser, Alfred Flack, had to leave home at 3 am in order to cover the distance, arriving at Stoke Ferry in Norfolk at 6.30 pm.

MP's drop in to local aids show

THE bright yellow exhibition trailer housing the Visiting Aids Centre run by The Spastics Society, found a new and prestigious location outside Westminster Abbey recently so that MPs interested in disablement could see for themselves the range of aids available. Now the centre is on its travels again.

The VAC unit will visit Basingstoke from April 28 to May 3. Opening hours are 10 am to 1.30 pm and 2.30 pm to 6 pm. During Welsh Naide, the VAC will be located outside the main entrance to Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, from May 8-10. Opening hours will be 9.30 am to 6.30 pm on the 8th and 9th, and 9.30 am to 4.30 pm on Saturday, the 10th.

Concern

The project has been organised since 1971 by The Spastics Society and is now financed by the Department of Health and Social Security. They are concerned that thousands of people suffering from a variety of handicaps, do not know of the existence of many aids and services that are available to help them and make life easier for them. The centre will be particularly helpful to elderly people living on their own who may find coping with every-day activities increasingly difficult because of failing powers. It will also be of interest to professional people involved with the handicapped or elderly.

Many aids have been set up for visitors to try. Examples are a simple bottle opener, specially adapted car controls, a telephone with an amplifier for the deaf, and a telephone which flashes as well as rings, gardening tools with special grips for sufferers from arthritis, reachers which enable objects to be retrieved from the floor without bending, long handled toe washers, pullers to help handicapped people put on socks, stockings and tights, walking aids which convert to seats and hot water bottle holders to facilitate safe and easy filling.

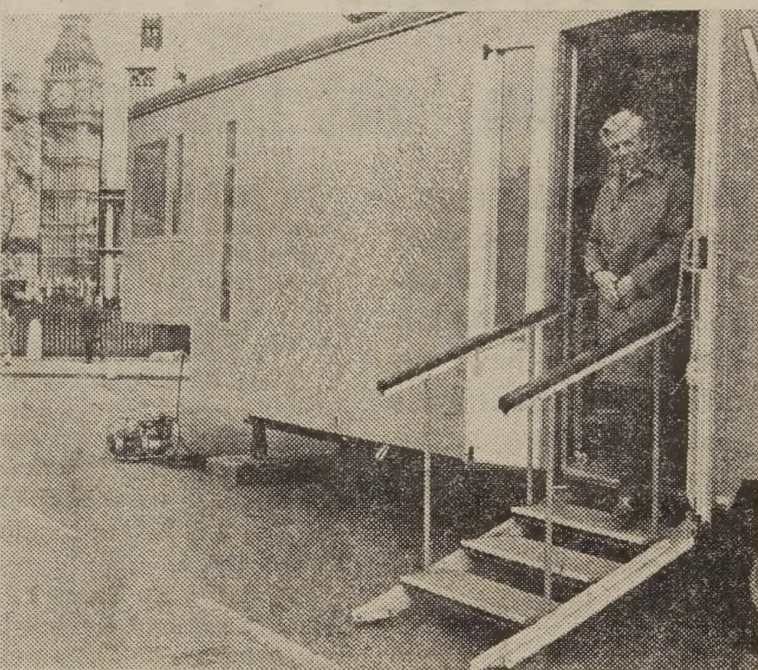
Library

An illustrated index system gives details of many more items which make life easier for the disabled inside the home and outside it. There is a reference library which as well as supplying details of further aids, also contains files and books about charities, holidays, designing, etc. Audio visual facilities for slides and films include an outside projection screen.

An occupational therapist is in attendance to give help and advice. A lift at the rear of the vehicle provides access for those confined to wheelchairs.



● THE Chairman of the All Parliamentary Disablement Group, Jack Ashley, together with Secretary John Hannam, MP, and Alf Morris, former Minister for the Disabled, try out some of the aids for themselves.



● JACK Ashley, MP, was among the people dropping in to look round the Visiting Aids Centre run by The Spastics Society. This mobile exhibition of aids

for the disabled was located for one day outside Westminster Abbey, and many MPs were invited to see for themselves the range of aids available.

Using 'idle' hours for free transport service

COVENTRY Social Services are running a free transport service for disabled people which is being financed by the Manpower Services Commission.

The idea is to use the specially adapted vehicles which are normally used to transport people to and from day centres. During the day these vehicles usually lie idle between around 10 am and 3.30 pm. Under the new scheme however they will collect handicapped people from their homes by prior telephone arrangement and take them to visit friends and relatives, or to keep medical and dental appointments.

One able-bodied helper may also travel free to and from the disabled person's home.

The scheme also operates in the evenings and at weekends and is aimed at helping those with mobility problems who are unable to use public trans-

port or taxis have no alternative transport and who may in addition be socially isolated or on a low income.

She keeps people on the move

IF it's transport you're after, Teresa will willingly fix it. When Teresa Keicher became a resident in a flatlet in Upper Springland, Perth, belonging to the Scottish Council for Spastics, her determination not to sit around doing nothing was enough to give anyone's heart a lift.

Teresa contacted the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and now she acts as a telephone liaison link, organising transport for patients in outlying areas who have to come to hospital for treatment.

April cookery

LAMB ROYALE (serves 4)

- 8 lamb cutlets
- ½ lb pork sausagemeat
- 2oz mushrooms
- 1 tspn grated onion
- ¼ tspn sage
- Watercress

Method: Finely chop the mushrooms, sprinkle with salt, toss in a pan over a gentle heat until all the moisture has evaporated. Mix with the sausagemeat, sage and onion. Season with salt and pepper. Trim the cutlets removing any skin or excess fat, tie each into a net round with a piece of string. Grill each cutlet on one side only then cover the uncooked side with the sausage mixture, pressing it firmly against the lamb, return to the grill and cook until the meat and sausage is cooked. Garnish with watercress.

STUFFED POTATOES (serves 4)

- 2oz home-produced butter
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 4oz mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 x size 6 egg, beaten
- Salt and pepper
- 2 teasps chopped parsley
- 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
- 4 large potatoes
- ½ pint stock
- 2 teasps fresh cream
- White string (to tie)

Melt 1oz of the butter and fry onion gently for two minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue frying for a further minute. Mix in the egg and season with salt, pepper and parsley. Mix in breadcrumbs to make a firm consistency. Set aside. Peel potatoes, cut a "lid" from one end and hollow out the inside. Stuff the hollowed out potatoes with the onion and mushroom mixture, replace lids and tie firmly in position with white string. Melt remaining butter in a saucepan, brown the potatoes lightly all over, add the stock, bring to boil, cover and then simmer for about 30 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked through (this depends on their size). Remove potatoes to a hot dish. Stir cream into stock and cook, stirring until it all begins to thicken. Pour over potatoes and serve.

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Young skiers prove a point of equality

● BOTH 15-year-old Jimmy Warren, above left, and Evelyn Lawless, a 24-year-old GPO telephonist, pictured right, are spastic skiers who enjoyed themselves on the slopes of Aprica in the Italian Alps last month.

The possibility of handicapped people being able to ski sounds almost impossible, but the party of 32 young people between the ages of 15 and 30 who stayed in Aprica, proved that it could be done.

They travelled with the Uphill Ski Club which is supported by The Spastics Society. Some went for the first time, while others had already achieved recognised skiing standards



as laid down by both British and Italian Ski Federations.

Before being accepted for the holiday, these Uphill Ski Club members must be able to walk at least 400 yards unaided and to pick themselves up from the ground. They undergo a programme of pre-ski exercises and their condition is assessed and graded by a panel of medical advisers. They are accompanied by professional ski instructors and by helpers.

One young spastic member of the club commented: "If you are handicapped you are always conscious of trying to keep up with able-bodied people, but when you are

on skis you can go as fast. It's great."

The club has organised three skiing holidays with great success. Consultant Paediatrician Dr David Morris, of London, has been closely involved with the holidays, and the patron of the club is Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader, who is himself without legs.

Appeal

The Uphill Ski Club has just launched a fund-raising appeal with a target of £25,000. The money will be used to help sponsor handicapped skiers as many are still at school or unemployed. Each individual makes a contribution towards the cost of the

holiday, but the main bulk of the expenditure has been covered by grants and donations.

Miss Rusty Wright, The Spastics Society's Southern recreations officer, explained: "These trips have enormous benefits for those taking part and our medical advisers accompanying the party have spoken of the medical and psychological advantages gained by handicapped young people. The psychological benefit is that, perhaps for the first time in their lives, handicapped people are being helped and encouraged to get out and about and to compete in activities readily enjoyed by the more able-bodied individual."

Marathon match buys gifts for hostel

A 36-HOUR badminton match by Southampton Rotaract has provided The Spastics Society's Merlyn House Hostel, Southampton, with much-needed equipment, including a wall unit, dart board and heated food trolley.

Mr Ian Williamson, President of Southampton Rotaract, handed over the trolley to Mr and Mrs W. Powell, Manager and Manageress at Merlyn House Hostel, West End Road, Southampton.

'Heartbreak' ban on spastic daughter

WITH two children already prosperously settled in Australia and a third planning to emigrate, the Vennings, of Baldock, Herts, thought they would do what the Australian posters urge, and put their family in the picture by emigrating too, with their fourth child. Mr Bill Venning and his wife Christine explained that Sheree, 21, was spastic and asked if they would still be able to emigrate.

They claim that the Australian High Commission said they "Couldn't see why not." So when a letter subsequently came saying, "As your daughter cannot meet the high standards required by the Australian Government your application will not be proceeded with," the Vennings were shattered.

"The Australian High Commission had never even seen Sheree and to get a letter like that, so hard and callous, it just took the legs away from under us," said Mrs Christine Venning. "Their attitude has brought heartbreak to our family."

Now the Vennings have applied to emigrate again and have enlisted the support of a national newspaper and their local MP, Ian Stewart, in their campaign to be a reunited family.

Family

It is over 12 years since the eldest of the four Venning children, Tim, 38, emigrated and he now owns a successful factory in Perth, repairing rubber accessories for the mines.

Just over a year ago Pam, 36, and married to a farmer emigrated, and she and her husband own a thriving sheep station covering 5,500 acres. The second son, Bill, a self-employed plumber expects to emigrate this year.

Mr Bill Venning senior is 62 and served 27 years in the Navy before becoming a foreman at a local factory which will close shortly.

"After we were turned down by the authorities my daughter sent Sheree's fare and £100 spending money so we could go on holiday, and it took months just to get a three-month holiday visa. Sheree was so happy in Australia and everyone took to her and talked to her," said Mrs Venning.

"We are a very close family despite the thousands of miles that separate us and the reason we want

to go is for Sheree's sake. We are not getting any younger and the point is that when we go she will be all alone. There will be no-one to take care of her over here, and love her. We wouldn't be dependent on the Australian Government for anything. My husband has two pensions, one his Naval one, and both would be paid to him in Australia, and my son and daughter are both very prosperous. We are hoping and praying that we get out there so that Sheree will have a good home where she is loved. We could sleep easy at night if only we knew we could go."

Sheree is handicapped along her left side and retarded, and attends the Adult Training Centre in Stevenage. Mrs Venning had no problems arise with Sheree during their nine-week stay in Perth. "In fact we got a letter from someone over there this week addressed to Sheree asking when she would be coming. Sheree is determined to go.

Now the Vennings' second application to emigrate is being considered in Canberra itself and they are desperately hoping that they will be allowed to go on "compassionate grounds".

Easier at Earls Court

EARLS Court Exhibition Centre, venue for the Boat Show and for the Ideal Home Exhibition, is currently undergoing a face lift. Facilities for disabled visitors are being improved by the provision of ramps to the main entrance and by accessible toilets.

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SN April

TV and the deaf

We are a group of deaf and hearing people from various national organisations for the deaf, who are interested in establishing a regular television programme for deaf people which can include their native language, ie, sign language.

The campaign is presently preparing a case to put forward to the television companies, with the aim of succeeding by 1981, the International Year of the Disabled. We have received the support of deaf organisations but to help our campaign, we feel we must have support of other sympathetic organisations as well, hence the reason for writing to you.

Television and radio are two of the most important factors of modern day lives.

It must also be emphasised that the programme we visualise would contain not only sign language, but also speech and sub-titles, and therefore any viewer would be able to understand the programme whereas at present deaf people are being deprived of the right to understand the normal television programmes. A most important benefit of such a programme is that the problems of the deaf and the understanding of sign language will be publicised and this can only encourage integration between deaf and hearing people.

AUSTIN REEVES,
Secretary,
Deaf Broadcasting
Campaign.

Taking the risk out of money raising

I DO agree with the letter in Spastics News from Mrs G. Jones of Dyfed. (Mrs Jones questioned the sense of many sponsored events, and particularly mentioned a sponsored parachute jump which resulted in a broken ankle for one girl taking part.) The efforts and time spent on raising funds to assist those less fortunate than ourselves is most certainly worthwhile, but do let us all avoid both risk of personal injury and inconvenience to others should accidents occur during risky ventures.

My own fund raising activities (playing the piano) are intended to give pleasure, with no risks or inconvenience to anyone. On the contrary I find it indeed gratifying to see old age pensioners and others enjoying a sing song and then contributing towards the wel-

LETTERS

fare of spastic and other handicapped children. I may well undertake a sponsored piano playing marathon later this year, but this again will, I hope, be giving pleasure and entertainment in return for donations to our local funds.

May I wish every success to all who undertake fund raising activities in 1980, but please, let's cut out any risks of injury — it is surely better to collect a penny with pleasure than a £ with a fractured limb.

Alan Mayman (Mr),
Glynswood,
Chard,
Somerset.

Friendship Register

MAY we give you some information about the Friendship Register, which is a voluntary organisation, formed in 1970, in an effort to combat loneliness in Sussex. Since that time over 1,000 people have joined the Register, and we know, from letters which we have received, that we have been able to help many of them to find friends and to join in informal social activities in small groups.

Since I became organiser in 1978, we have received requests for penfriends from disabled and handicapped

people in other parts of the country. We are, now, extending our service to provide penfriends for them as well as for able-bodied people.

Details of this service have been accepted for publication in the Directory for the Disabled to be published in 1981. We are, however, able to enrol members now. I will send further details to anyone who may be interested.

Mrs Joan Mertens,
Organiser,
The Friendship Register,
29 Goldstone Way,
Hove,
Sussex BN3 7PA.

Private medicine

PRIVATE medical schemes, I believe, inflict great damage on Britain's greatest welfare asset and manifestation of community provision — our NHS. The principle underlying the NHS is based on a rejection of commercialism and a belief that equality of patient should be the guiding influence regardless of the individual's ability to pay.

The "Save a Baby" campaign is just one, albeit the latest, campaign which the Society has run to demand improvements in NHS facilities. The greatest incidence of baby death and handicap occurs amongst babies born to mothers in social classes IV and V. Members of these classes could never afford to buy commercial treatment.

When individuals buy medical privilege it must be considered to be regrettable and socially undesirable. However, until suitable legislation has been enacted this must remain a matter for individual conscience. There is a great difference between individual action and deliberate employer involvement.

The TUC, which represents the working people of Britain, has spelt out its attitude clearly. I would suggest that on this, as on numerous other occasions, the TUC is speaking for the vast majority of the citizens of this country.

Thus, it is regrettable, to say the least that The Spastics Society which is already operating a BUPA scheme for senior staff should be introducing a scheme to other members of staff. I suggest that the Society ought to sever its links immediately with any organisation which promotes privilege in the way I consider BUPA does. It is hypocritical to demand better NHS facilities when one is seeking personal protection from a private scheme.

I think there should be an urgent debate amongst all members of staff and amongst the voluntary members and supporters of the Society on the BUPA involvement. I appeal for the commencement of this debate and the interim a freeze on all progress with the new BUPA scheme.

We must be seen as supporting the principles of equality of treatment and the communal strength of the NHS and spurning anti-social private schemes.

J. T. Tizard,
Appeals Officer,
East Region.

Pen friend

I AM an Austrian girl, 28 years of age. I would like a pen friend to correspond in letters, even to get to know each other in person when we know each other better in writing. I have lived 13 years in England with my parents. I am tall and slim. I have light brown hair. I am a bright cheerful girl who makes people laugh. I like dancing to pop music, travelling by air, car, ship and trains and I like reading very much. I work at a training centre in High Wycombe.

I don't get very many letters and I feel sad about it. that is why I want a pen friend to write to me.

Martina von Ballasko,
"The May,"
7 Chilterns Park,
Bourne End,
Buckinghamshire.



Easier outings now for Emma

THE sun shone extra brightly for Mike and Stella Cottrill and their daughter, Emma, when she received her special chair from South West Surrey Spastics Group. From left to right: Mike, George Dean, the group's chairman, Emma, Stella and Carol Myer, principal of White Lodge Centre, Chertsey.

Picture by Bill Beminster, Woking News and Mail

STELLA Cottrill was bubbling over with joy when she and her husband Mike went with daughter Emma to White Lodge Spastic Centre at Chertsey, Surrey.

It was a day that Stella, of Langmans Way, Littlewick Road, Woking, had been looking forward to ever since principal Carol Myer had told her that four-year-old Emma was being presented with a special £300 chair by South West Surrey Spastics Group.

Anxious

Emma was born severely handicapped and has to have special nursing care. Whenever Stella took her out in the family Mini, strapped into the children's seat fixed to the back seat, she was always anxious in case Emma needed attention.

"I didn't like her sitting in the back where I couldn't see her," she confessed. "But now she is

beside me I shall be so much happier.

"We did not realise how many extra things are needed when you have a spastic child and how little help there is available from the Health Service," Mrs Cottrill added. "We are most grateful to the SW Surrey group for its kind gesture. Not only is Emma comfortable, but the chair is so much easier to get in and out of the car."

The chair—which to the casual glance looks like any other pushchair — has back wheels connected to a spring, with a lever which retracts them underneath the seat. All Mrs Cottrill has to do is lift the front wheels into the front of the car, retract the rear set, and swivel the chair onto the car seat, slipping the handle over the back to secure it. This model is complete with a smart zipped bag for shopping.

Mr George Dean, chairman of the group, made the official presentation. He said afterwards: "Emma has exclusive use of the chair for long as she needs it."

Jane Pearce

"Help yourself to the help you need"



COOKING

For those with hand disabilities, many gas cookers can be fitted with special handles and controls. And remember, gas cookers need no matches to light them, because they have automatic ignition.

If you are confined to a wheelchair, you may find either a cooker with a waist-level grill or a built-in cooker helpful.

For those with failing sight or blindness, special braille thermostats are available for most gas cookers, together with braille cooking charts.

GAS FIRES

Many gas fires are available with easily accessible top controls, to save bending, and most fires light automatically when turned on.

And for those people with hand disabilities, a special tap adaptor may be fitted to a number of fires.

CENTRAL HEATING

Gas central heating needs very little attention and can be set to your own particular pattern of living. Time

British Gas offers a wide range of help to those who need it most—elderly and disabled people.

If you have a disability—or have friends or relatives in need of help, here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you.

controls and room thermostats help to save gas and keep running costs down.

PRE-PAYMENT GAS METERS

Meters can be re-positioned at a convenient height for disabled people, and special extended handles are available.

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Go to your local gas showroom. If you cannot go, contact the Home Service Adviser of your Gas Region, who will be happy to call on you at home and provide advice free of charge. (You'll find the address and telephone number in your local telephone directory under GAS).

MORE HELP

For information about other ways in which we can help—with safety and economy hints, for example, or with a choice of ways in which you can spread the cost of your gas more evenly throughout the year—contact your local showroom.

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Boost for Hawsworth Hall fund

HAWKSWORTH Hall, the residential school near Guisley in Yorkshire, run by The Spastics Society, is currently fundraising for £1,000 to buy a "Basic Skills System" which will help assess the children in their care.

So staff members were obviously thrilled and delighted to receive an anonymous donation from a pensioner — £200 in cash in a plain envelope which was sent to Radio Leeds.

All the pensioner wrote was: "Will you please forward it to a children's home for the handicapped or spastics."

Radio Leeds obliged and they also gave air time to Mary Howard from Hawsworth Hall to say a big thank you.

Cheers to the Mugs and Jugs

MELDRETH Manor School, run by The Spastics Society, has some good friends and neighbours in the locality. The school has just received £100 from customers of the Fox Inn, Bourn, who for the past 12 months have organised events such as a car rally, a boat trip and raffles all to raise funds for the pupils. The loyal regulars call themselves the Mugs and Jugs Club.

Another Year — and looking for impact in 1981

FULL participation and equality were declared the theme of the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons 1981, and one of the first items on the agenda as far as the UK Committee was concerned was a switch in semantics to "International Year of Disabled People".

Whether the change of words matters all that much is irrelevant to most people. However the UK Committee, nine of whose members are disabled and three of whom are parents of handicapped children obviously felt it did if they were to be equal participants. Either way the initials IYDP are now commonly accepted jargon.

There's no money to spare of course, not that anyone expected there would be after the precedent set by the International Year of the Child. The IYDP Committee itself receives funds from the DHSS for staff, office and running expenses and any societies wanting the support of the IYDP Committee in order to back their approaches to trusts for specific project funding should send full details to the IYDP Com-

mittee at the address given below.

One of the main criticisms of the International Year of the Child was that planning began far too late for the year to be effective and impact making.

This certainly isn't happening with IYDP year and wheels are already beginning to grind into motion in 1980. Anyone planning sports activities for 1981 for example is requested to contact the Sports Council where Elizabeth Dendy is liaising with both the IYDP Committee and the British Sports Association for the Disabled, so that activities don't overlap and so that there is maximum publicity.

In spite of recently announced cuts the BBC is already planning some 20-25 new programmes linked to IYDP 1981 and the Continuing Education Department will repeat another 30 relevant past programmes. BBC 1 has agreed to the production of a major 50 minute documentary planned for transmission at peak viewing time to herald IYDP.

The Spastics Society at both national and local



EQUALITY, hope and support form the message of the design chosen by the United Nations to be used in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons 1981. The emblem, based on an original design presented by the French National Commission for IYDP, is said to represent two people "holding hands in solidarity and support of each other in a position of equality", and the leaves surrounding the symbol are part of the emblem of the United Nations.

grassroots level has been holding meetings together with other voluntary organisations. Prevention has been the theme of the working group holding its first meeting at Park Crescent while over at Fitzroy Square there has been the

organising of the "Towards '81" conference for 15-19-year-olds held over the weekend of April 18-20 at Goldsmith's College. The aim is equal representation of able bodied and disabled teenagers on various inter-voluntary group projects. At the conference a group leader was appointed for each geographical area, and groups will continue to work on their projects throughout 1980.

So what's happening around the rest of the world? Apart from conferences that is? A World Day for the Disabled will be held in Geneva; UNESCO has plans to revise and update world usage of Braille; and in Australia, the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled is pressing for the Bureau of Statistics to conduct a national household survey.

Societies wishing to have the positive support of the IYDP Committee to help with their fund-raising projects should write to Stephen Crampton, Secretary, IYDP Committee, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 26 Bedford Square, London, WC1D 3HU.

Better care plan for mothers-to-be

PLANS to encourage better care before birth in the Cambridge area were announced by Dr Spencer Hagard, Specialist in Community Medicine for the Cambridge Area Health Authority, at a seminar organised by the East Region of The Spastics Society, at Jesus College, Cambridge.

Improved transport facilities to encourage mothers-to-be from outlying rural areas to attend antenatal clinics were being planned, said Dr Hagard, who referred to the availability of services being an important factor in helping to reduce perinatal mortality, which is higher in the country areas of East Anglia than in the cities. Plans for Cambridge also included a health education programme.

Dr Ralph E. Robinson, Consultant Obstetrician at Addenbrookes Hospital, told the audience of local midwives and nursing staff that the proportion of pregnant women not seen by a consultant obstetrician was still high. He called for the presence of more senior obstetricians in the labour wards as well as for the fetal monitoring of all pregnancies, not just the "at risk" ones.

A fetal instruction card on which the mother herself recorded the frequency of the baby's movements could be a useful innovation. In addition fetal blood sampling should be more widely available, said Dr Robinson.

The seminar on "Death and Damage at Birth" was chaired by Professor John Davis, Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Cambridge who made a plea for a sense

of proportion. It wasn't fair to describe our perinatal record in his country as appalling, said Professor Davis. Our rates were falling rather more slowly than other countries, he said, but once born, our low-weight babies stood a better chance of survival.

Other speakers at the East Region Seminar included Mr and Mrs D. L. Jones, parents of a handicapped child from Essex, and Dr Elizabeth Dryburgh, Consultant Paediatrician, Peterborough District Hospital who showed slides of life-saving equipment used in intensive and special baby care units.

Arts week

THE Harford Group, which has many spastic members as well as able bodied ones, is planning a Summer Course from August 9-16 at Prospect Hall, Birmingham. The three course subjects consist of Painting; The Spoken and Written Word; and The Theatre. Short story writing, after dinner speeches, two minute talks as well as sketches for revues are included in the Spoken and Written Word course.

Music Hall, Revue and Concert Party, Costume and Stage Design are included in the course about The Theatre.

Cost of the course is £60 and application forms can be obtained from Mrs V. French, 45 Highlands Boulevard, Leigh on Sea, Essex.

Your free announcements

VACANCIES during May and from August 30 to end of September for the six-berth caravan sited at Sandford Park, near Wareham, Dorset. TV, shower, fridge, main drainage, and is adapted for use by the handicapped. Inquiries should be made direct to Mrs W. Stephenson, 2 Ashling Close, Bournemouth. Telephone: Bournemouth 514645.

FOR sale: Vessa standard wheelchair, six months old and rarely used. Price £350. Contact J. P. Floodgate, 21 Barton Close, Kirkwood Road, London SE15 3XY. Tel 01-639 1144.

FOR sale: Braune electric car, white, four-wheeled vehicle with detachable hood and sidescreens, touring range of 18 miles at 4½ mph on rechargeable heavy duty batteries from mains electricity. Climbs 4in kerbs and one in four inch gradient hills. Purchased November 1978 and used over eight months for between 20-30 hours in all. Can be used on pavements or country roads without licence. Immaculate condition. £500. Contact Robert Stubbings, Overmeadows, Modbury, Devon. Phone Modbury 493.

RED four-wheel Braune Batricar for sale. Extras include: Hood, seat belt, two batteries, car horn, spotlight, front and rear lights and indicators. Extra footbrake. In excellent condition. £525 ono. N. C. Thody, Trentham, Chalk Road, Loxwood, Sussex. Tel: 0403 752168.

EXCHANGE Visit Request: A 38-year-old lady resident at a home for the severely handicapped in Geneva seeks accommodation in England for a few weeks or months in a similar environment to her own. She lives in a studio, ie, one large room with bathroom and kitchenette. Totally spastic, she needs help with washing, dressing, provision of meals, etc. Uses an electric wheelchair, cannot speak but can express herself in writing. The studio in Geneva would be at the disposal of an English handicapped person for an equivalent period of time.

Any offers of accommodation or exchange visits to be sent to: Merle Davis, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

FOR sale: Bec 17 Electric Wheelchair with three battery packs, £185 ono. Offer welcome. Please contact M. J. Lawler, 42 Dads Lane, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8PQ.



ANTHONY Quayle in his "official" role as Chairman of the Stars Organisation for Spastics introduces the Duchess of Kent, Patron of The Spastics Society to singer Cliff Richard at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon. The SOS raised £7,000 at the event, a glittering memorial concert for Norrie Paramor, a past vice-chairman of the Organisation.

Star role for charity

Continued from Page 6

Gaulle, and Monty — the people who were running the war — with a soft bed to sleep in at night and a roof over my head. Then I did some jumping out of parachutes and found myself in Albania."

All this is said in measured tones, a classic example of the British understatement in the best traditions of John Buchan. One gathers that once he got to Albania, Mr Quayle's war remained interesting but very very much more dangerous. He glosses over this and says in offhand way: "I was there for a while, difficult job — got back to Italy in the end. I had a comfortable war although I more than made up for it in Albania where it was rather

frightening, but still very interesting." Mr Quayle went into Albania as a member of the Special Operations Executive while a Communist revolt was under way and a Partisan he worked with, a man of his own age, is now Minister of the Interior. "I'd like to go back to Albania but, well — one never knows . . ." he mused.

After the war came a period of eight years as Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford on Avon. "Soldiering and the Army teaches one a certain amount about organising things and Stratford didn't seem very difficult after the war," he said with a smile.

He is happiest when he is working and the money he makes from the American film world enables him to act in the English theatre —

"Although I'd rather have a good part in a film than a poor one in a play."

Then Mr Quayle is up and away to bury himself in the complexities of the SOS, its projects, finances and commitments, looking a good decade less than his years allege.

Biter bit!

A BURGLAR breaking into a spastics centre in Dundee obviously bit off more than he could chew. Detectives ruminating over the vital clue the burglar left behind — two false teeth — didn't take long to digest the evidence. They soon found a suspect with two missing teeth which were a perfect match.

That's one burglar who'll be once bitten, twice shy.

Homeworkers add lustre to their brilliance with jewels

THE Society's Bedford hotel in Clacton-on-Sea played host to another week-long training course for home-workers run by Homework Manager for The Spastics Society, Mr Arthur Dobson, helped by his wife Elsie.

Not only does the Homework Scheme provide a pleasant part-time occupation to supplement the income of people too severely handicapped to take outside jobs, it also acts as an enormous morale booster as 33-year-old Kathleen O'Connor from Kenilworth, near Coventry, explains:

"The money does help, but it's not only the money. It's the satisfaction and the sense of achievement that counts most," says Kathleen who lives in a local authority residential home. Kathleen has



been assembling costume jewellery as well as selling it for six years now, and this is the third time she has attended a refresher course.

But there were several newcomers as well like Sara Robinson from Penarth, who has tried to get into her local Remploy but without success. Sara attends a day centre three days a week which she plans to continue doing

because of the company, but assembling jewellery in her own flat will give an additional option. Sara discovered on the course that working with pliers was difficult for her, but her stone setting according to Mr Dobson is first rate.

Also on the course were Pauline Underwood, Janet Locke and Carol Hammond from Southend Work Centre and Tina Franklin from Chingford Work Centre.

● PICTURE above left: Mr Arthur Dobson, Homework Manager for The Spastics Society, has to be a keen businessman constantly updating the range of metal jewellery in order to supply the current market.

"Our jewellery sells competitively on its own merits, not just because it's made by spastics," he says.

Best selling lines are St Christopher medallions. Heart-shaped pendants and lockets are another top seller.

● FOR 22-year-old Kevin Prettyman from St Albans attending the week's training course for homeworkers at Clacton-on-Sea was a big achievement in itself. He is pictured above.

Kevin, who is severely athetoid, had attempted the course once before without success. But this time recent new drug treatment has helped control his movements.

● TWENTY-FIVE-year-old Linda Harrison is employed full-time at Cannongate Works in London doing quality control checks on all the jewellery items assembled by the homeworkers. Linda, who has worked with Mr Arthur Dobson for four years now, went to the course for the first time in order to meet the new homeworkers and to assist with their training.



● SHEILA Smith who lives near Burton-on-Trent has been assembling as well as selling jewellery now for six years. She attends her local day centre a couple of days a week, but working mainly at home fits in well with looking after her elderly parents. Sheila is an active member of the committee of the East Staffordshire Spastics Society.

Pictures by the Evening Gazette, Clacton.

Deputy Director

Continued from Page 1

left at the end of March to devote his time to the International Cerebral Palsy Society, and a new Director has yet to be chosen. Mr Whiteley will act in this capacity until a new appointment is made. Mr Belson points out in his statement that Mr Whiteley shares the Executive Council's view that the post of Director of the Society should — with continuity in mind — be filled by a younger person. Once the appointment is made, both the Director and Deputy Director will be operating in an executive role, the Director being responsible for the day-to-day running of the Society, and the Deputy Director responsible for its development.

Mr Whiteley is a married man with three grown-up children, who lives at Henley. His interests outside his business life include boating, tennis and bridge, and particularly membership of the Lions Club which is dedicated to community service. With other club members he is a regular helper at the home for disabled people.

Christie and his new 'Pet' work wonders with words

by LIZ COOK

CHRISTIE Nolan, the brilliant 14-year-old spastic boy from Dublin, has had his second breakthrough.

The first came when he was given Lioresal, the anti-spasmodic drug which enabled him to tap out, on an old typewriter, with massive effort, incredibly beautiful poetry. Now he is to get his very own micro-processor, thanks to Phil Odor, a research fellow at Edinburgh University, the overwhelming generosity of readers of The Sunday Times—and initially, to the efforts of The Spastics Society.

For it was the Society's literary award which first brought Christie's amazing creative genius to light. An uncle of Christie's in England read that entries for the award were being sought and told Christie's mother in Dublin. Mrs Bernadette Nolan rang the Society's Information Department to ask if, being Irish, Christie was excluded from taking part?

Staff were able to assure Mrs Nolan that Christie could indeed enter, and

when Mrs Edna Healey wife of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer who was judging his section, read his work, she was enthralled. Christie was given a special award which marked the turning point.

"I cannot say how grateful I am to The Spastics Society, none of this would have happened if it had not been for their interest in him," she says. For the next link in the chain was a four-day visit from the Sunday Times writer Mar-

Vital breakthrough for boy writer

jorie Wallace, who had read Christie's prize-winning entry. However, then came the closure of The Sunday Times due to an industrial dispute, and Marjorie Wallace's story and Lord Snowdon's pictures lay unused for the best part of a year.

Then last December, the story finally saw the light of day and was read by Mr Odor. He was so impressed by Christie that he visited the family in Clontarf, Dublin, to see if he could help in any way.

He could, and did. He thoroughly studied Christie's needs and



● CHRISTIE'S joyous face shows just how much his new "Pet" means to him — and to his parents, Joseph and Bernadette Nolan.

Picture by Mark Ellidge, courtesy of The Sunday Times

arranged the loan of a "Pet" micro-processor adapted to them. The Sunday Times published the story and asked readers to help buy the machine for him. The cost was £2,200—and within a week, readers had poured in over £10,000. The sum rose to £20,000 by the next week, and now it is likely that other children will also benefit.

"It's absolutely wonderful," said Mrs Nolan. No longer will she have to pull up the typewriter on the dining room table and sit holding Christie's chin as he, in every sense of the

word, painstakingly taps out his unique work, at the agonising rate of perhaps five words a night. Now the garage will be converted into Christie's own study to house the machine which, with its keyboard, TV screen, word store, and specially designed programmes will give him the freedom to write at will.

It will still take time—he will operate the machine with both his chin and the pressure of his knees, and Mrs Nolan reckons that it will take him between six months to a year before he is fully proficient and working totally on his own.

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